

INDEXA



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E30GA—An Eritrea DXpedition

by Larry Word, NF6S, and Bruce Richards, WD4NGB

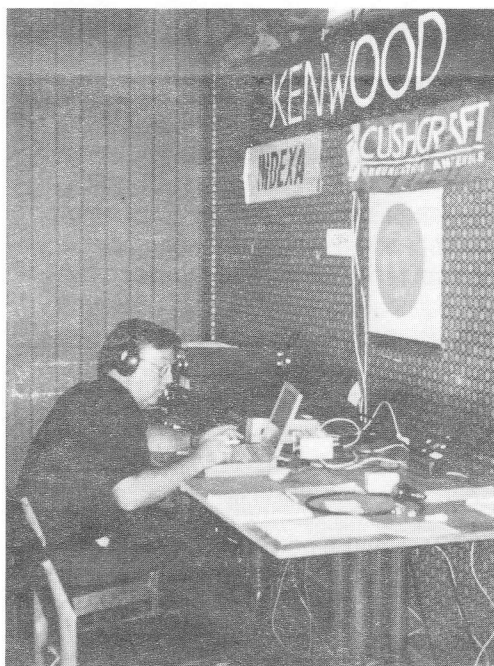
After many months of planning and coordinating, the following operators were scheduled to meet at the Frankfurt, Germany International Airport: Franz, DJ9ZB; Elvira, IV3FSG; Max, I8NHJ; Joe, KO4RR; Vance, N5VL; Michael, EA8AFJ; Larry, NF6S; and, Bruce, WD4NGB.

Originally, nearly twenty operators had agreed to go; however, several dropped out when they learned that each person's license would cost \$500! Unexpected personal obligations precluded a couple of others from going so, eventually, only ten operators committed, and one dropped out only hours before our departure.

On November 3rd, eight operators met at the Frankfurt International Airport for the flight to Eritrea. The ninth operator, Mike, N9NS, missed the meeting because his flight was booked a day later. Ultimately, he was delayed two more days. A medical emergency on his flight to Chicago caused the airplane to make an unscheduled landing in Canada, which made him miss his connection to Asmara. Since the Asmara flight only operates three times a week, Mike spent two days in Frankfurt, courtesy of United Airlines, waiting for the next flight.

Arrival at Asmara

At 10:30 p.m. on November 3rd, our team arrived at the Asmara Airport



DXpedition team member Bruce, WD4NGB, providing QSOs from E30GA.

and began the process of clearing customs.

The guys who packed their radios in their suitcases were allowed to take them in and declare them on their entry forms, but because we forgot to record equipment serial numbers, the remainder of the equipment was held by customs.

Eritrea was formerly an Italian colony and most Eritreans speak Italian, so we sent our Italian team member, Michael, EA8AFJ, to the customs office the next morning. Securing the necessary pa-

perwork, he returned to the airport customs office, only to discover that the equipment had been moved to another location within the customs area.

This delay taught us that, prior to arrival, it helps to have a contact or customs broker in country who can coordinate communications between the customs office and Ministry of Communications and arrange an import duty exemption.

Operations and equipment

Vance, N5VL, brought a TS-570 in his baggage along with a power supply and a Carolina Windom antenna, so he was on the air on 4 November 1998 just as soon as we got our license from the Ministry of Communications.

While Vance made the first few contacts we were busy putting up the antennas for 10, 12, 15, 17, and 20. We finally got the station on with all antennas on the 5th of November.

Larry, NF6S; Franz, DJ9ZB; and Joe, KO4RR were going to put up two big vertical antennas for 80/160 and 40 meters but there was not enough space for all on the hotel roof. Subsequently, we hung a sloper for 80m looking north, an inverted vee for 160m looking north, and a 40m sloper facing a little northwest. The 80m vertical element was hung down from the top of the hotel and fed with 450-ohm open wire. This antenna performed very well, both on CW and Phone.

E30GA worked many stations on 80m. Some were from the east coast

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with a scattering of midwest. However, the team worked hundreds of Europeans and JAs. There are some very big signals coming from JA on 80 these days.

The 40m antenna was exactly the same and also performed well. The 40m pileups on CW and Phone lasted as long as six to eight hours with no signs of slowing down.

The 160m inverted vee also performed well; however, conditions on 160 were not good during the team's stay. We had a couple of openings to the east coast, but nothing to the west side of America on 160m. However, we had a good showing of Europeans on 160.

The best antennas were the Cushcraft A3S and the A3WS (WARC) beams. We worked Europeans hour after hour all day. We'd begin the mornings by working JAs and the Pacific and as the skip moved to the west we would start working the Asian Russian stations, then the rest of Europe until late afternoon. Then the USA would open up toward Eritrea at 5 or 6 p.m. our time (sunset) and we would work 10, 12, 15, and 17 meters. After working the Europeans for nearly six hours, the Europeans expressed vocal disappointment when we began asking for USA or JAs.

Winding down

Vance, N5VL, had to leave early because his son was injured in an accident. Franz, DJ9ZB, tried to extend his stay but the airlines would not let him change his tickets so he left early as originally planned. When Vance and Franz left they took one of the TS-570s and the FT-900. E30GA was left with three operating stations. One of these stations was operating on 6m/10MHz, one on 10/15/20m, and the last station on 12, 17, 40, 80, and 160m.

E30GA had a six element 6m beam up about 100 feet. During a Sporadic E/transequatorial (TE) opening, E30GA worked 232 European stations in 23 countries. We almost missed the opening but echos on 10m signals gave us a clue. Max, I8NHJ, worked all the stations on 6m and was beaming with a strong sense of accomplishment.

Anecdotes

A funny thing happened to Franz, DJ9ZB, during a power outage. On this occasion, the outage lasted awhile so he left his room to see if everything

was okay in the upstairs operating area. He stayed there awhile even though the lights had come back on. When he returned to his room, the floors in the hall and several adjacent rooms were flooded. Seems he was running the hot water faucet, waiting for the hot water. When the power went off, so did the running water (water pumps being electric). When the power came back on, so did the water pumps. It was a mess!

Larry, NF6S, had quite a scare when he lost his passport for a few hours, only to find it in Franz's, DJ9ZB, room—right where he had left it!

Community Service

Bruce, Max, Michael, and Mike made a presentation to Eritrean students at the university. They covered many subjects including licensing, propagation, and general radio theory.

The students seemed knowledgeable in the fields of communication and electronics and were excited with the prospect of a future club station. They already have equipment which was given to them by the two groups in 1993. We checked it out and it's ready to be used.

Official visitor

During the operation, we were visited by the Minister of Communications. He seemed impressed with the operation so we expect it will be easier for future Eritrean operations. I'm sure there will be future DX operations from this country.

Final numbers

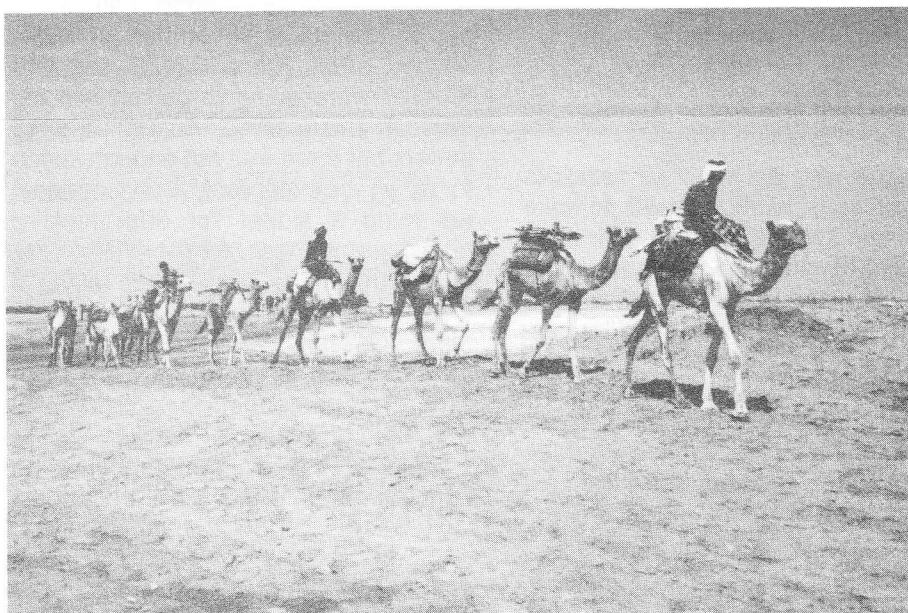
The E30GA DXpedition logged a total of 35,412 QSOs. The breakdown was 20,751 SSB QSOs, 12,978 CW QSOs, and 1,683 RTTY QSOs.

The first QSO was with 9K2ZZ on November 4th at 1215z on 10m SSB.

The last QSO was with S51RB on November 17th at 0822z on 20m RTTY.

Sponsor acknowledgement

The E30GA team would like to thank the following sponsors for their support during this DXpedition: Kenwood Radio, Henry Radio, Cushcraft Antennas, Ham



Local Traffic!

Haney Howell, K2XN INDEXA Equipment Custodian

Radio Outlet, Heil, INDEXA, DX4WIN, Norms Rotor Service, The Daily DX, The Oceania DX Group, The GDXF, WF1B RTTY software, AET in Italy, and QSLs by W4MPY.

We also thank the following DXers: K3ESS, KA3CAI, XE1CI, KD4AFW, K1MZ, W8RU, W4DR, N5CQ, KA6C, JH1AJT, W6AQ, W5BXX, W4WY, TVDXA, K1WY DXA, Hoosier Contests, Computer House, and others.

Epilog

Eritrea only recently became a country. In 1991, the Eritreans won a 30-year war for independence by defeating Ethiopia's army, the largest in Africa. Eritrea became Africa's newest democracy in 1993 after an internationally supervised referendum where the population almost unanimously (99.8%) voted in favor of independence. They are presently at war with Ethiopia over a border dispute.

The State of Eritrea has an area of 125,000 sq. km. and a population of about 3.5 million. 350,000 live in the capital city of Asmara. Asmara is located in the mountains at about 2400 meters altitude and 80 km. inland from the Red Sea. Other large cities are Keren, about 80 km. northwest of Asmara, and Massawa, the country's major sea port. Eritrea is located in the Horn of Africa. It has 800 miles of Red Sea coastline and more than 355 islands. Its neighbors are Ethiopia and Djibouti to the south, and The Sudan on the west and north. Eritrean time is 3 hours ahead of GMT. Asmara is at a high altitude so the weather is mild considering its proximity to the Equator. November starts the cooler time of the year.

Address problems

INDEXA received a letter from the German postmaster informing us of many address problems.

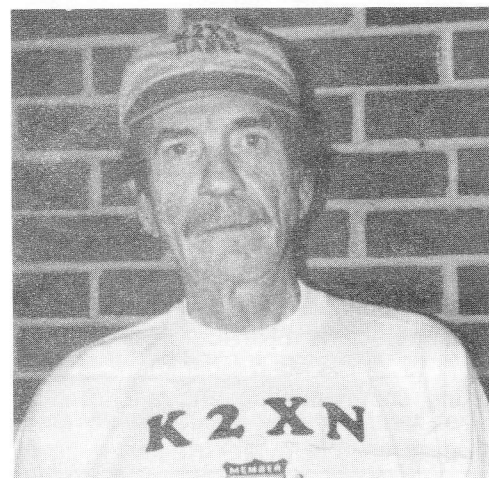
Members, please carefully check your mailing labels. We know there are problems but we can't correct them until we hear from you.

Haney Howell, K2XN, was first licensed in 1957 as KN4SWG in Copperhill, Tennessee. Command sets and fringe TV reception drew him to the late nights, an operating habit he still pursues to this day. A year later, he got his first job in commercial radio, which led to a career in television news.

Life and the 60s put a crimp on Howell's ham operations. After serving a stint in the Air Force and finishing his Masters Degree, Howell hit the road and drove from Europe to Asia. He joined CBS News in India and then moved to Phnom Penh, Cambodia. It was there he discovered Swiss Red Cross workers struggling to communicate with Geneva on a Swan 350. Falling back on his love for CW, Howell rejoined the ranks as one of the operators. No, he doesn't have a copy of the XU1AA logs!

Howell remembers stepping over stacks of Collins KWM2s, S Lines and 30L1s in the markets between his Saigon apartment and the news bureau. While living in Saigon, Howell built an HW-101 and his return to ham radio was complete.

He relicensed as WD4AZE in 1976 after the fall of Vietnam forced him back to New York City and a job at ABC. He recovered KN4SWG, then picked up KC0EN while working in Denver, Colorado as a television reporter. NO2N became his call when he returned to New



York, and he picked up K2XN when the FCC released the dead-man calls. He also operated as VP2LS, VP2LDE, and J6LDE during frequent trips to St. Lucia in the late 70s.

Howell first joined INDEXA when he moved to Rock Hill ten years ago and landed a block from W4WMQ! They still await the day when they have their identical beams on identical towers pointed toward one another and they both hit the amplifiers on 20!

Haney is now a professor of mass communication at Winthrop University and is actively seeking to break 250 on CW DXCC. He splits his time between vintage Collins and Drake gear and his trusty Ten Tec Omni D.

New Life Members.....

K5FUV,	AB4RL,	N6MZ,	N9QQK,	ON5II,
HS1NGR,	K4ZLE,	and,	N9SF	

Extra Help Provided By.....

W3ODJ,	N9SF,	KA3UXU,	HR2JGG,	WB3DNA,
W6NIZ,	KM4LS,	K7WP,	WA6WXD,	HS1OVA,
W4MEL,	KN7Y,	W7LR,	WD6EYD,	KF2XF,
KE4HZM,	PY2OCG,	W8WC,	KJ7D,	W1HEO,
N3MDF,	K3FK,	KP3X,	CT1EFC,	DJ9ZB,
and,	Dateline DX Association			

Staff Member—Gene, N5BLK

Gene, is one of INDEXA's newest staff members. He is fifty-five years old and retired after teaching special education, driver education, and high school social studies for twenty-five years. Following retirement, he worked as a radio operator/dispatcher for the local sheriff's office.

His wife is also a retired teacher (math). They have a son living near Houston, Texas; a daughter living near Denver, Colorado; and two grandsons.

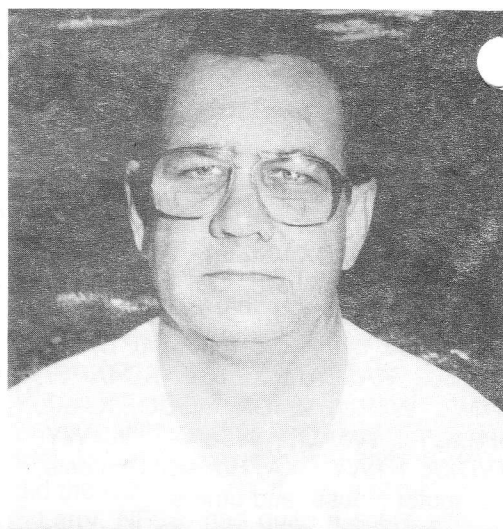
Gene became a Novice Class operator in 1978. His main radio interests are DXing, county hunting, and ragchewing.

He enjoys HF mobile operation and helping others contact needed countries for the USA-CA Award.

In addition to DXCC on CW and Mixed, he has cards in hand to complete Mixed 5BDXCC. He has worked 310 countries—308 are confirmed.

His station consists of a Kenwood 520-S and a Yaesu 747 for fixed and mobile use. His antennas include a TA-33 and dipoles. Gene has never had an amp—100 watts only!

Other hobbies include photography and traveling.



N5BLK

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